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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	USSR	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Notes on Education in the USSR	DATE DISTR.	31 October 1956
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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

Comments:

1. Reference page 1, paragraph 1, according to the Sixth Five-Year Plan, universal secondary education will be realized in cities and rural localities through the teaching of children in ten-year schools and specialized secondary educational establishments.
2. Reference page 2, paragraph 4, the USSR Council of Ministers issued a decree on 6 June 1956 abolishing tuition for the last three years of secondary schools, specialized secondary schools, and higher education establishments.

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STATE		ARMY		NAVY		AIR		FBI		AEC	
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REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 28 Sept 56

SUBJECT Notes on Education in the USSR

NO. OF PAGES 8

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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Elementary Education

1. Until 1951, the period of compulsory education in the USSR was four years. In that year, the period of compulsory education was raised to seven years. The Soviet government has striven to keep children in school for ten years, and there were indications that a program of compulsory ten-year school attendance was around the corner. Until recently, children entered school at the age of eight or nine years. Lately, there has been a tendency to have children commence school at seven, but this has not yet become a general practice. Schools were coeducational, but efforts were made in the larger cities to separate the sexes. In spite of the universal compulsory school program, some illiteracy was still found in the USSR, even among the youth. This was a result of the inadequacy of the census machinery. Parents of children who had not been statistically recorded often kept their children away from schools. The incidence of this practice was high in the backward rural areas, but was rare in worker families; the practice was totally unknown in intelligentsia circles.

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2. The school year began on 1 September and ended on 20 May. After the fifth school year, each child was required to take an examination in a number of prescribed subjects. The examination after the seventh school year was recognized as a graduation examination. Thereafter, the pupil had the option of discontinuing further formal training or of transferring to a tekhnikum or of continuing for three more years in the same school. If he chose the last option, he would qualify to take the final examination, referred to by source as Abitur, which was a prerequisite for admission to university-level study.
3. The tekhnikum program required four years. The curriculum was one of specialization for a given profession. At the same time, however, general education was continued; for such subjects, the same text books were studied as were used by students in the ten-year school from the eighth to the tenth grade.

Secondary Education

4. Those students who continued in the ten-year school past the seventh year entered a phase which was known as secondary education. Instructors for these higher grades were graduates of a pedagogical institute. While the first seven years of attendance had been tuition-free, 150 rubles were charged for each of the last three years. Exempt from the tuition were waifs, children of veterans killed or maimed in action, and children whose only surviving parent was a teacher.
5. The class period lasted 45 minutes. It followed a pattern that was uniform for all subjects for a given school year. The first half hour of the period was devoted to a check of homework. During the remainder of the period, the teacher explained new material which the student might later review virtually word for word in his textbook. No theme was studied and no problem was discussed that was not contained in the textbook. As the subject matter was very extensive, the teaching staff was constantly faced with the necessity of crowding the material into the prescribed hours. If the prescribed problems had not been covered in a class hour, the entire class had to be kept after school. If there were weak students in the class, the instructor did not have time to review the uncomprehended matter with these students during school hours. He must perforce concern himself with these weak students after school hours. The policy was not to give recognition to the problem of weak students; their existence was charged to the instructor, according to the motto, "Weak students prove the inability of the teacher." This policy resulted in a tendency on the part of the teachers in Soviet schools to rate students higher than they deserved. In order to make this practice

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plausible and to keep the scholastic record of the class on as high a level as possible, those students who had once been recognized as capable continued to receive high grades, even if their performance had slackened. The same tendency was revealed in the practices of schools entering competitions for the best grades; schools with the highest scholastic average, based on the meaningless grading system, marched at the head of a parade at public celebrations. The result was, of course, that report cards did not constitute a reliable gauge of accomplishment. Indeed, good grades might at times be purchased through bribery.

6. Students who had maintained a 100 percent rating of "Outstanding" received a gold medal. Students who had received "Outstanding" in all subjects but Russian composition or had received "Good" in two other subjects were awarded a silver medal. It was for this reason that the grading of the final examination was of considerable importance, and all the more irresponsible was the injustice, if not downright dishonesty, that governed the issuing of grades. Students honored with either a gold or a silver medal did not need to take an entrance examination for matriculation at a university, institute, or other school of higher education. Furthermore, they were given preference for scholarships.
7. The performance of the student during his last year played, at best, a minor role in determining the winner of an award. A few weeks prior to the final examination (Abitur), the general or over-all performance of each student was examined by a conference of teachers, who at this time also estimated the probable grades that each student would obtain at the coming final examination. Only in the rarest instances did these estimates vary appreciably from the actual grades ultimately received. The medal winners, too, were earmarked in this conference, and after the conference they generally received only the highest grades. In the oral part of the final examinations, this was easily arranged, as high marks could ingeniously be "played" to the student.
8. In the written part of the final examination, too, the earmarked medalist was assisted if he made a disappointing showing. He was secretly given the opportunity to correct his papers or even to write the paper again. The written tests, however, after having been corrected in the school had to be submitted to the city council and the local Party headquarters for approval of the final grade. It was in connection with this review that source observed arbitrary acts motivated only by Party interest. Two such examples were recounted:
 - a. [redacted] an extraordinarily talented girl. Every-
one expected that she would receive a gold medal. Her final

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written test had been rated by all instructors at the school as "Outstanding." When her paper was returned by the Party headquarters, however, it was rated only "Good." Curiosity was aroused, as the paper did not indicate any concrete errors. It was then alleged that the paper had been wanting in style. As the alleged error was ludicrous, it was finally concluded by the students that the true cause for the poor rating was the Greek origin of the student's parents.

- b. A boy [] had attracted attention by his extensive range of knowledge and his assured demeanor. He was [] reared by his step-sister. The stepsister was a member of Stalingrad's city council, and had for years consciously directed the child towards a diplomatic career. Upon completion of the ten-year school, he was to attend the Diplomatic Institute in Moscow. Only one barrier had yet to be surmounted: only recipients of the gold medal award were accepted for the entrance examination at this institute. It was clear to all, however, that the boy would qualify for the gold medal even without assistance from the staff of instructors. Since the boy had also participated amply in political affairs, and in view of his sister's public post, no one entertained doubts about the benevolent view of the Party. When the written test was returned to the school, it carried the Party grading of "Good." The only error which was indicated showed that the boy had mistakenly substituted an "a" for an "o" in some quoted name; that is, in haste, he had written illegibly. Yet as a result of this grade, the boy's entire dream of the future was crushed. One explanation was found, namely, that one of the boy's grandfathers had once been sentenced to jail.

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9. It should be noted that the causes or explanations for the Party's action in the above two cases were those given by [] schoolmates. Some support was given to the schoolmates' construction, as the rest of the test papers were not severely graded, and many weaker students received grades of "Outstanding."
10. The written test in the final examination given by the ten-year school consisted of two parts: one in mathematics and one a literary essay. The oral test in the final examination dealt with the following subjects:

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Russian Literature

Physics

Chemistry

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Mathematics I (Arithmetic and Algebra)

Mathematics II (Geometry and Trigonometry)

Foreign Language - The Soviet student required only one foreign language in the ten-year school, and he could select from English, German, and French. English and German were preferred by the students. The language ability of students at the time of the final examination sufficed only for reading simple texts. Conversational practice was not given in school.

University-Level Education

11. Well-nigh all students passed the final examination of the ten-year school and began their university-level education the following fall. In selecting their further course of study, the students were skillfully guided by the Soviet government into areas of shortage, such as agriculture, veterinary medicine, and machine construction. Students were discouraged from entering overcrowded fields, which recently included medicine and the natural sciences. As a rule, students preferred to study in large cities and especially in Moscow and Leningrad. Again, the government made its regulating hand felt, so as to direct the student flow to universities in smaller cities and more remote regions.
12. The machinery through which the government exercised this regulating power was largely the following:
 - a. Every school of university level, i.e., university, institute or other school of higher education, was assigned a matriculation quota for each of its faculties. This figure varied from year to year, but a school could not register either more or less students than prescribed by this plan.
 - b. The selection of students was based on their past performance and marks; but as the universities had no faith in the final examination grades, every candidate (except gold-medal winners) was required to submit to an entrance examination at the school which he preferred. This examination generally was held one month after the final examination of the ten-year school. The number of test subjects differed for each student and depended on the field in which he wished to specialize. Matriculation was based on the results of this examination, and it could happen that only one of a dozen applicants was accepted.

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13. Those students who, on the basis of the entrance examination, failed to matriculate at the university of their choice, then tried a second or third school, until they found one that would accept them on the basis of the mark obtained in their entrance examination. The entrance examination did not have to be taken more than once, and its grading was accepted throughout the USSR. In this manner, it was virtually guaranteed that even the least attractive agricultural school in the remotest region of the USSR would receive its quota of students, for such schools took those applicants with the lowest grades who had been refused admission elsewhere.
14. This method of selection and matriculation, of course, influenced the scholastic level of the various institutions of higher education. It was essentially for this reason that the achievement level of the preferred schools and the preferred cities was higher.
15. [redacted] by 1953, in spite of the planning, there existed shortages of university-level openings. Many applicants who failed to obtain admission returned to their ten-year schools and prepared to take the entrance examination in the following year. It was expected that this number would increase from year to year, because the Soviet state's endeavor to raise the mandatory school period from seven to ten years led to a rapid rise in the number of ten-year graduates unable to find admission to universities. [redacted]
16. The curriculum of Soviet university students followed a uniform and prescribed pattern: they had to attend prescribed lectures (generally three subjects each with a two-hour class per day) and had to take an examination on each subject at the end of every semester. An examination failed had to be repeated. For this reason, all students of a given faculty completed their studies in a set number of semesters. For institutes, the required number of semesters was generally eight. The same number of semesters applied at most other higher schools.
17. If the student took a correspondence course, the period of study was increased by one year. Most schools offered correspondence courses. In these courses, the student worked independently at home and submitted his papers to his school. Each summer, the correspondence student had to journey to his school, where he attended classes for approximately one month and also took tests. A translation of the official correspondence curriculum offered by the Mathematics Faculty of the Stalingrad Pedagogical School of Higher Education for the year 1948 appears on page 7.¹ The most important data of the regular attendance program are given for purposes of comparison.
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1. It will be noted that the total number of hours of examinations on the chart is given as 32, although the number of hours of examinations given in the various semesters add up to only 29.
- [redacted]

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(Translation from Russian)

Curriculum for Correspondence Course at the Pedagogical School
of Higher Education (Mathematics Faculty)Ministry of Higher Education, USSR
24 September 1963

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Subject	List by Semesters			Number of Hours			Curr. for Reg. Course	List by Semesters																				Total hrs. of study for course incl. State Exam.			
	Exams	Test	Written Work	Curr. for Reg. Course				Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10																							
				Total	Lecture	Seminar		Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar	Lecture	Seminar				
Foundation of Marxism-Leninism	1,4	oral 2	1,2	250	168	82	100	72	28	30	12	10	6	20	8	6	4	4	12	15	4	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	120	
Political Economy	6,8	7	-	140	88	52	48	36	12	24	12	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	
Psychology	1	-	-	86	58	17	30	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	
Training	3	-	3	104	70	34	40	40	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	
History of Pedagogy	6	-	-	58	36	22	36	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	
School Hygiene	7	-	-	34	18	16	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	
Technical Drawing	-	2	-	34	-	34	20	-	20	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	
General Physics	1,2,3,4	1,2,4	1,2,3,4	505	260	245	260	160	100	30	28	8	30	28	27	58	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	260
Analytical Geometry	2	oral 2	1,2	176	106	70	110	80	30	38	16	42	14	42	14	30	12	30	12	14	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	110
Mathematical Analysis	2,4,5,6	oral 2,4,6	2,3,4,5,6	420	245	175	268	168	100	34	13	-	-	16	20	-	-	38	24	20	-	10	60	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	268
Higher Algebra	7	6	-	142	89	53	52	36	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53	
Differential Geometry	6	-	6	68	51	17	40	30	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	
Mathematical Statistics	9	8	-	149	91	58	90	60	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	
Geometry and Teaching Methods for Algebra	10	10	-	152	120	32	54	44	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	
Descriptive Geometry	9	8	-	104	76	28	68	50	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	
Basic Concepts of Geometry	10	-	-	56	36	20	42	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	
Theory of Numbers	8	-	-	32	22	10	18	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	
Elementary Mathematics	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	4,6,8,10	4,6,7,8,10	257	167	90	186	110	76	-	-	-	-	8	-	28	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	186
Instructional Methods in Mathematics	9	8	9	129	72	57	50	40	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57	
Instructional Methods in Physics	10	10	-	124	65	59	50	20	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59	
Theory of Functions of Variables	10	-	-	72	72	-	40	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	
Special Mathematical Seminar	-	10	-	60	-	60	30	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	
Special Pedagogical Seminar	-	10	-	36	-	36	30	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	
Foreign Language	4	oral 1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	140	-	140	60	-	60	-	-	-	-	12	-	8	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	
Total hours (in 1st & 8th year)				2518	2033	1485	1740	1124	616	162	78	36	24	136	100	48	12	128	112	50	10	162	78	45	14	170	70	40	20	140	
Examinations				32	-	-	32	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	2	-	5	-	1	-	4	-	3	-	5	-	5	-	-	-
Written work				-	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	5	-	4	-	1	-	3	-	1	-	4	-	1	-	-	-
Instructional Mathematics																															
a) Arithmetic	4	4	-	-	-	-	27	23	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	15	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
b) Geometry	7	6	-	-	-	-	51	29	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Algebra	8	6	-	-	-	-	60	36	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
d) Trigonometry	10	10	-	-	-	-	38	22	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total							156	112	76							8		20	20			16	4		22	14	5		26	26	

After this five-year course of study the graduate
becomes a Physics and Mathematics Teacher in a
Soviet Secondary School

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University Student Life

18. Contacts among students were numerous and crossed professional and faculty lines. Most universities offered student dances every Saturday evening.
19. The university student enjoyed few privileges or discounts. The most important advantage was his lodgings; but as there was a severe shortage of university dormitories, he was often required to share his room with as many as seven other students. This, of course, did not apply to the more exclusive schools, such as Lomonosov University in Moscow.
20. The Soviet student was unassuming and unpretentious. He lived modestly and appeared to be happy with his lot. The average student received a scholarship amounting to 200 rubles a month. The stipend was increased as he advanced to higher classes. This money did not suffice for his needs, and usually his parents supplemented his income. The student did not engage in part-time employment, as his vacation between semesters lasted only one month and was sorely needed for rest.
21. In connection with scholarships, the Physical Institute for Nuclear Research appeared to occupy an exceptional position. Students of this school received higher stipends and lived more luxuriously. They were, on the other hand, subjected to several restrictions. For example, they could not converse about their studies and their work, nor could they invite friends to visit them and could not even reveal their address. It was for this reason that the exact location of the institute and the number of students or staff were not known. The students were not, however, compelled to sever all contact with outsiders.

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